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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQI GOVERNMENT, CONSTITUTION;
BAGHDAD

SUMMARY: Discussion on the Constitution was the major editorial theme of the daily newspapers on August 28, 2005.
END SUMMARY.

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SELECTED COMMENTARIES

- [1](#)A. "The Constitution is the Fruit of the Political Process" (As-Sabah al-Jadeed published in Arabic a page-eight, un-attributed editorial on the constitution)

"After the downfall of the dictatorial regime, freedom rose like the sun in Iraq and the country began to move forward towards security, advancement, and prosperity. Today, the Iraqi people have to play a big role to make this process successful. All Iraqis, whether they agree or disagree with the current political process, need to work towards Iraq's national interest. The Iraqi people challenged and crushed terror when they headed for the ballot boxes during the elections on the 30th of January. Now, it is time to complete this process by drafting a constitution for this country and its people. It is time for Iraqis to now harvest the fruits they have been waiting for. They will not be affected by terror as long as the constitution will open the door to hope and progress. The development of the political process means that we are defeating terror in Iraq. So, we call on all Iraqis to bring their containers to collect the fruits of the political process."

- [1](#)B. "The Constitution--Between Harmony and Veto" (Al-Bayyan published in Arabic a back-page editorial by Adel Al-Rubai'ee on the constitution)

"All civilized countries have their own democratic and constitutional experiments that were developed over years before reaching their final forms and many countries' experiments are similar. However, establishing democratic communities does not come from nothing but is developed through years of political work and effort. Indeed, the constitutions of other countries have taken years to develop. Concerning our draft constitution, I believe that current disagreements and disputes amongst Iraqi politicians in the National Assembly represent a healthy debate to build a new Iraq. The Iraqi people will have their final say about the constitution during the referendum. But, the most important matter now is to solve all pending issues in accordance with national interests. These issues must not be resolved according to a minority veto at the expenses of the majority because this does not benefit the political process or national interests."

- [1](#)C. "Our Iraqi Efforts and Our Kurdish Hopes" (Al-Taakhi published in Arabic a front-page editorial by Sa'ad Badr Khan on the constitution)

"The Iraqi constitution is being drafted amid disputes, disagreements, and harmony amongst Iraqi politicians. This represents the proper way to reach the goal that is to make the constitutional process successful. This constitution can make Iraq's two main nationalities, Arabs and Kurds, in addition to other sects, feel they are real Iraqi citizens. The Kurdish list insists on defending Iraq as one country and at the same time it defends Kurdish rights through this constitution. When the Kurds insist on not making Iraq an Islamic republic this means that they want to build a modern state for all Iraqis. When the Kurds demand women's rights

they call for guaranteeing all Iraqi women's rights without discrimination. The Kurds believe in democracy and in a new Iraq and they also think that it is necessary to install federalism throughout Iraq. We know that federalism is an optional choice that has its own justifications. These are the Kurdish orientations that represent purely Iraqi viewpoints. The Kurdish attitude was characterized with transparency and insistence on making all Iraqis participate in the current constitutional process. The Kurds have played a vital role in encouraging dialogue about the constitution. History will record the great Kurdish role in making the draft constitution successful. History also must appreciate the Kurdish National Assembly's decision on approving the draft constitution. This approval came after Barazani worked hard to make all dissenting opinions come together to prevent Iraq's enemies from disrupting the political process. The upcoming stage following the referendum will be more dangerous and sensitive. The next period requires more wisdom, attention, accuracy, and objectivity to make the referendum successful and to pass the constitution's articles. This is the main goal of any honest Iraqi."

D. "We Are Waiting for the Good News"

(Ad-Dustoor published in Arabic a front-page editorial by Bassim Al-Sheikh)

"We are expecting the National Assembly to approve the draft constitution today by two-thirds of its members. A promotional campaign will begin to educate Iraqis about the basics and principals of the constitution, in spite of those who are working against Iraq's unity and trying to create crisis and sectarianism among Iraqi sects; those who are singing for civil war and division will never relent in their mischievous plots against Iraq. The draft constitution was submitted to the National Assembly by the deadline of the first extension and now members are having discussions and making amendments to the last draft to vote for final approval. Hence, everyone should be aware today that there is no way to go back--the political process should move forward and we should all work together to help it succeed. We should all work for the benefits of our Iraq and work against our enemies' will and make this day a day of good news."

E. "Harmonious Agreement Is A Healthy Sign in the March Toward Democracy"

(Al-Ittihad published in Arabic a page-three column by Abdul Hadi Mahdi about the constitution)

"The structure of Iraqi society is considered complicated compared to other societies. Iraqi society consists of pluralistic nationalities and a diversity of religions and sects that have uniqueness that must be respected. Despite all that, Iraq's society seems to be more united than other societies which lack such diversity. Therefore, this must be considered during the drafting of the constitution. Harmonious agreement is considered a healthy sign in the democratic march, because Iraq's foundation cannot withstand a certain group imposing its will on others. The time of marginalizing others has gone; all Iraqis must assert their political and national rights and this cannot happen without a permanent constitution drafted through harmony. Today, Iraqis hope to reach harmony through their political leaders' announcement of a final draft for the permanent constitution."

F. "The Constitution and Political Memory"

(As-Sabah published in Arabic a page-two editorial by Falah Al-Mish'al about the constitution)

"An observer of the constitutional committee's work can find some relevance in the political memories of committee and TNA members. Those members recall their disasters and sacrifices while they are drafting the constitution phrase by phrase. The majority of TNA members are Shiites and Kurds and they share joint obsessions, due to their suffering under the former regime. Therefore, you can find their demands in line with their political memories. The Sunnis are against the others because they represent the ruling class in Iraq from the establishment of the Iraqi state in 1921 until Saddam's toppling in 2003. Therefore, they act with a ruler's logic and not that of one who has been ruled. And their political memory functions in the past more than it does in the future. The question is: will the draft constitution define Ba'athist ideology as a terrorist one that propagated real criminal activity, started wars, and triumphed in the comprehensive destruction throughout Iraq because of Saddam's policies? This trail of destruction will require more than decades in order to be forgotten. It is etched in the memories and the spirit of Iraq more than merely being mentioned in a document made of paper."